



## INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

### Chair's Corner



Three months into 2017 and we are operating with a continuing resolution and a hiring freeze. AND, those federal leaders who have several years of service have been in these operating conditions before. I take great pride in the resiliency of our federal workforce and federal leadership, ensuring the continuation of valuable services to our citizens!

Our Federal Executive Board continues to plan and coordinate events, meetings and trainings to help our agencies and employees to operate in the most effective and efficient manner. Some of our upcoming events include:

**Awards Program:** We are currently in the nomination process for our Houston FEB Awards program! Deadline for nominations is March 1st. The Program is scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup> and a registration form is included in this newsletter for your convenience.

**Leadership FEB:** Leadership FEB is designed specifically for executives, senior managers, and aspiring leaders within the federal sector. This program is unique in that it is designed for federal participants and will showcase federal agencies and their leaders. It is intended to develop talents and broaden perspectives of present and future federal

leaders. (This is a useful resource to develop talented individuals within your agency). The 2017 class will be starting soon, an email will be sent with material.

**Leadership Classroom Training:** The Houston Federal Executive Board has coordinated a one-day training class based on responses to a training survey that was distributed.

Interagency training opportunities such as this provides each agency a sliding scale of savings created by the entire governmental community.

A description is provided on page 9 and registration on page 10 of this newsletter.

**Pre-Retirement Seminars:** We are offering full-day pre-retirement seminars for FERS in May (thank you to the US Coast Guard for providing the facility). A registration form is provided further in this newsletter for your convenience.

I encourage you to take advantage of the cost-effective offerings of our Federal Executive Board that result in a cost-avoidance for the participants.

I hope to see you at some of our events!

Tim Jeffcoat, Chairman

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## How Leaders Unnecessarily Elevate Their Own Stress & Frustration

The things you don't say make your belly hurt.

Leaders cause themselves stress and frustration when they sweep performance concerns under the carpet.



### ***Discomfort:***

I recently asked a group of leaders, “What makes giving corrective feedback uncomfortable?”

1. I don't want to hurt someone's feelings.
2. What if they don't follow through?  
We'll have the conversation and nothing will change.
3. Perhaps I'm being too hard on them too soon. Maybe they need more time.
4. I'm concerned about demotivating them.
5. I wonder if there might be emotional retaliation.
6. I won't have answers to argumentative people.
7. The person receiving it might hold it against me.
8. I might make things worse.
9. They won't receive it well.
10. It will damage the relationship.

### ***Join the group:***

A majority of leaders want to feel more comfortable giving corrective feedback. About 7% of the last group I asked said they

were highly comfortable giving corrective feedback.

### ***3 ways to increase comfort:***

I asked the same group, “What would make you more comfortable giving corrective feedback?”

1. Learn how to deal with nerves.
  - A. Roleplay the conversation. *Preparation lowers stress.*
  - B. Map out the conversation.
  - C. Stay on topic.
2. Embrace transparency and vulnerability.
  - A. Your shaky voice lets colleagues know it's difficult. Most respect your commitment to have the conversation, even if it's uncomfortable.
  - B. Own your discomfort. “This conversation makes me feel uncomfortable, but it's important for you.”
  - C. Share a bit of your own journey. Perhaps you have faced similar challenges.
3. Prepare an opening line.
  - A. I've noticed ..... The impact of this behavior is ....
  - B. I'm concerned about 'xyz', and I think we need to discuss it.
  - C. I don't think you're serving yourself well when .... Let's talk about it.

Frustration, stress, and gossip go up when leaders hold in their concerns about a team members performance.

Taking action is often less stressful than thinking about it.

<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2016/12/16/how-leaders-unnecessarily-elevate-their-own-stress-and-frustration/>

## ***HOW INTENSE CURIOSITY ABOUT PEOPLE ENHANCES INFLUENCE AND EXPANDS LEADERSHIP***

### ***Leadership curiosity includes:***

1. Curiosity about events. What's happening?
2. Curiosity about mistakes. What went wrong?
3. Curiosity about next steps. What's next?
4. Curiosity about best practices. What's working?

Leadership curiosity is often about getting things done, not people on the team. It's transaction, more than relational. People become tools, if you aren't careful.

Humility isn't simply being curious. It's intense curiosity about people.

Curiosity about what's next – apart from curiosity about people – comes off as pressure.

Additionally, it's possible that curiosity about mistakes is a form of arrogance.

### ***Humble curiosity:***

I feel a shift in myself when I move away from what I want to get done and toward intense curiosity about people.

Authentic curiosity about people is the tipping point between real influence and manipulation.

Influence and effectiveness expand with intense curiosity about people.

Manipulation is inconsistent with intense curiosity about the challenges others face. *Influence is built on understanding people. Curiosity is a beginning.*

### ***Intense curiosity about others is:***

1. Respectful. Curiosity about others expresses high regard for others.
2. Open. When you have the answer, you use it to evaluate others.
3. Courageous. Humble curiosity digs into tough issues.
4. Accepting. People have strengths AND weaknesses. *You must know*

*and accept people before you can help them find their place of impact.*

5. Compassionate.

6. Relational.

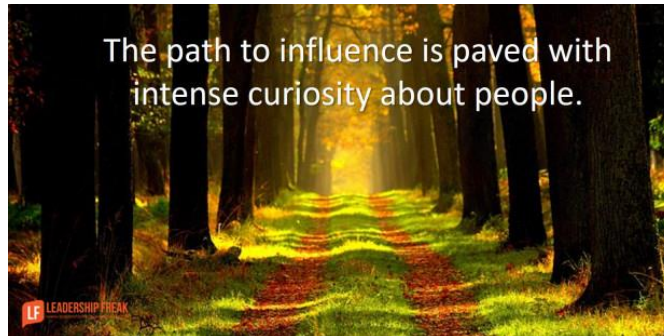
7. Inspirational.

High esteem captures hearts and ignites

energy.

You might be curious about many things, but curiosity about people reflects *and* develops humility.

<https://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2016/11/01/how-intense-curiosity-about-people-enhances-influence-and-expands-leadership/>



## HOW TO STOP SOLVING PROBLEMS AND START SOLVING PATTERNS

Recognize and solve negative patterns or you'll end up solving the same problems over and over.



The third time you have the same conversation, with the same person, about the same disappointing performance, you have a pattern, not a problem.

### *Pattern solving*

#### **#1. Point out the pattern.**

Watch for a déjà vu feeling. It may not be the exact same conversation. It just feels familiar. Point it out. "It feels like we've been here before."

#### **#2. Listen for fairy-tale thinking:**

1. "I just need to try harder."
2. "I'll get it done next time."
3. "I need to be more disciplined."

#### **#3. Say hard truths.**

When you hear, "I just need to try harder," say, "I'm surprised you aren't already bringing your best."

When you hear, "I'll get it done next time," say, "What specifically will be different next time?"

### *10 considerations when solving people patterns*

1. Desire.
2. Ability.
3. Capacity.
4. Commitment.
5. Distraction.
6. Purpose. Does the behavior or result matter?
7. Expectations. How are expectations clear? Foggy?
8. Clarity. How are goals clear? Foggy?
9. Team composition. Are the wrong people on the bus?
10. Management incompetence or confusion. When good people don't succeed, consider the possibility that management is the issue.

### *Temporary measures*

Breaking negative patterns requires leaders to institute temporary measures.

1. Frequent reporting.
2. Uncomfortable accountability.
3. Consequences.

### *Affirmation*

People need hope. Celebrate imperfect successes, even as you expect continued improvement. Hope energizes progress.

<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2016/12/21/how-to-stop-solving-problems-and-start-solving-patterns/>



## Substantially Equal Monthly Payments From Your TSP

Published: December 27, 2016

The most popular TSP withdrawal choice is called “substantially equal monthly payments” and there are two ways that an individual can elect their monthly payments. By the way, you would make your election on form TSP-70 (Request for Full Withdrawal) or on form TSP-77 (Request for Partial Withdrawal When Separated).

One choice is to take payments of a fixed dollar amount. You will elect the amount that you want to receive each month before taxes. You will then receive that amount each month, unless you change it. You will only be allowed to change the amount during the annual open season which runs from October 15th through December 15th, with the changes becoming effective in your January payment. The Thrift Board has indicated that they will modify this (i.e., allow more frequent changes) in the future, though they have not indicated exactly when this modification will take place.

When taking payments of a fixed dollar amount, how taxes are withheld depends on how long the payments are expected to last. In estimating how long the payments are expected to last, the TSP will divide your account balance by the amount of each monthly payment. In performing this calculation, the TSP assumes that your account will neither increase nor decrease in value. For example, if you had a TSP account balance of \$100,000 and chose a monthly payment amount of \$750 a month, you could expect to receive a total of 133.3 monthly payments.

What follows discusses the taxes on the

traditional balance within your TSP. For the Roth balance, there will be no taxes if your withdrawals are qualified. In order for a Roth withdrawal to be qualified, you must have had the Roth balance in your TSP for at least five years and you must be at least 59 ½ at the time of the withdrawal.

If the payments are expected to last for ten years or less, taxes will be withheld at a default rate of 20%. You can increase the withholding rate, but you cannot decrease it. This is likely to cover taxes for many of those who are withdrawing from their TSP account, but you should double check to be sure you have enough withheld. You could also rollover these payments to an IRA, as payments for ten years or less are considered to be an eligible rollover distribution by the tax law.

If the payments are expected to last for more than ten years, taxes will be withheld as if you were married, filing jointly and claiming three dependents. This is a very low rate of withholding and will, almost certainly, result in not enough being withheld for federal income taxes. Someone who is electing monthly payments that will last for ten years or more (e.g., most of us) should choose to have extra money withheld for federal income tax in order to avoid a nasty surprise on April 15th. Payments that are expected to last for ten years or more are not considered an eligible rollover distribution (they are called periodic payments) and cannot be rolled over into an IRA.

<http://www.fedweek.com/tsp/substantially-equal-monthly-payments-tsp/>

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## HOW TO INTERRUPT OTHERS AND GET TO THE POINT

You wouldn't be polite to someone who reached into your pocket to steal your credit cards. Don't be polite with people who persistently steal your time by talking on and on.

Common rules of courtesy don't apply to unrepentant blabbermouths.

*Politely break the rules of courtesy:*

### **Interrupt – Confess confusion.**

The moment you feel confused, gently interrupt and say, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but I'm lost. Give me your conclusion."

What's the point of letting someone talk when they lost you five minutes ago?

### **Interrupt – Confront wandering.**

Blabbers always go off topic.

The moment someone starts wandering, gently interrupt and say, "I'm lost. What's the the connection between what you're saying and the issue at hand?"

### **Interrupt – Challenge bull crap.**

Bull crap happens when you ask what they're doing to solve this issue. They talk about what *other people* need to do.

Challenge avoidance, confront smoke blowing, and explore excuses.

Interrupt with kind candor, courageous transparency, and forward-facing curiosity. But whatever you do, speak up, *unless you want more of the same.*

*Blabbermouths in meetings:*

If you lead meetings, everyone is waiting for you to deal with blabbermouths. Not only are blabbers stealing time from you, they're stealing everyone else's time too. Honor the team. Politely interrupt blabbermouths.



### **5 quick tips:**

1. Err on the side of courtesy. Don't rush to judgement.
2. Take the gentle private approach first.
3. Leave the past in the past. Don't say, "You always talk on and on."
4. Ask specific questions. Listen for specific answers. Interrupt and ask again.
5. Ask for conclusions at the beginning. "Give me your conclusion."

### *Exceptions:*

- Listen patiently to people who need to unburden their hearts, if it's not a pattern.
- Give space to someone with unique expertise, useful insights, and relevant experience.

<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2017/02/19/how-to-interrupt-others-and-get-to-the-point/>



# Full-Day Pre-Retirement Training Seminar-2017



*Be sure you are financially prepared to do all the things you've planned for your retirement!!*



## FERS session topics:

- Overview of FERS
- Survivor Benefit
- Thrift Savings Plan (to include Roth TSP)
- Federal Long Term Care Program
- Federal Employee Health & Life Insurance Programs
- Social Security
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Annuity Calculation
- Phased Retirement

Everyone arriving will need to present some form of Government issued identification. They will pull up to the guard shack and present their ID there. Once they have pulled through the gate, there is plenty of parking available. They will need to present their ID again when they come inside to the front desk and sign in. After that, they will be directed to the elevators and instructed to go to the second floor.

Upon arrival on the second floor, there will be a sign directing them to the main training room (essentially a sharp left off of the elevator and then a sharp right down to the double-doors).

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 23, 2017

**TIME:** 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Registration will begin at 7:30 am

**LOCATION:** US Coast Guard, 13411 Hillard St, Houston

**COST:** No fee for registration

**INSTRUCTOR:** Instructor is compensated by First Command, these sessions are educational ONLY. Instructor holds neither license nor affiliation with any financial products.

[ ] **Sign me up for the FERS Only session on Tuesday, May 23, 2017**

[ ] I am also covered by a special retirement provision (Firefighter/Law Enforcement/Air Traffic Controller)

***Seating is limited to 150 per session. Once a session is filled, we will discontinue registration.***

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouses are welcome to register, as well, with the understanding that federal employees will receive priority

AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please list your agency, organization and office symbol.

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this registration form to:	Houston Federal Executive Board 2320 La Branch St, Rm 1107 Houston, TX 77004
Email to:	Gerald.Poole@gsa.gov

*Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through May16, 2017. However, after that date, registrations must be honored by the individual or agency involved. If you are unable to attend, substitute attendees are authorized and encouraged!*



## HOUSTON FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD AWARD PROGRAM

Date:	Monday, May 15, 2017
Location:	Leland Federal Building, 1919 Smith Street, Houston
Time:	1:00 p.m.
Cost:	No fee (light refreshments will be provided)
Who should attend:	Federal Agency Leaders (or designee) and nominees



Celebrated the first week of May since 1985, Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) is organized annually by the [Public Employees Roundtable \(PER\)](#) and its member organizations to honor the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county and local government employees.

Throughout the country, mayors, governors, agency leaders, communities and public service organizations participate in PSRW by issuing proclamations; hosting award ceremonies and special tribute events; and delivering messages about the value of public service. All government leaders and public servants from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate by showing appreciation to their employees and colleagues and by sharing stories of excellence in public service.

***As part of this effort, the Houston Federal Executive Board is hosting an Awards Program to honor accomplishments of federal employees in the Houston area. We invite you to join us in celebrating those in Public Service during this special event!***

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### REGISTRATION

Name:	Phone:
Agency:	City:
Email:	

Email registration to:	<a href="mailto:Gerald.Poole@gsa.gov">Gerald.Poole@gsa.gov</a>
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Cancellation Policy: If you are unable to attend, substitute attendees are authorized and encouraged if within the appropriate management structure!





**Houston FEB is proud to host the following training:**

## **Secrets for Dealing with Difficult People**

**April 4, 2017**



**(1-day Course)**

Most people do exactly the **WRONG** things in most situations when dealing with “difficult” people. In this seminar, you will understand the forces that compel people to be difficult—and learn the **RIGHT** things to do about it.

### **TOPICS COVERED DURING THE DAY:**

- ❖ Primary reasons conflicts occur—and how to see them coming
- ❖ How to break the cycles that lead to hostilities.
- ❖ How to stop a conflict from escalating.
- ❖ How to address conflict in a way that minimizes defensiveness and hostility.
- ❖ Giving and receiving criticism.
- ❖ Conflict resolution strategies
- ❖ Define and recognize the value of diversity
- ❖ Learn how to define common ground from which to develop solutions
- ❖ How to talk to someone when you are angry, hurt, frustrated or insulted
- ❖ How to decrease resistance and increase cooperation
- ❖ What you can do to reduce conflict and promote better understanding.

### **HOW YOU WILL BENEFIT:**

- ❖ How to talk to someone when you are angry, hurt, frustrated or insulted.
- ❖ Learn how to define common ground from which to develop solutions
- ❖ Define and recognize the value of diversity.



**Houston FEB  
Leadership Development Training  
Registration and Enrollment information**



<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday, April 4, 2017
<b>Time:</b>	Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. Training will be: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
<b>Location:</b>	1919 Smith Street, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, Houston, TX
<b>Cost:</b>	\$162.50 per participant
<b>Who should Attend:</b>	This training is valuable to Supervisors, Leaders, and just about anyone in the workplace

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Registrant may pay by:

☐ check      ☐ credit card      ☐ government voucher

Contact for Payment: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to:	Federal Executive Board 2320 La Branch Street, Rm 1107 Houston, TX 77004-1032
Or Email to:	Gerald.Poole@gsa.gov
Call to provide payment info:	FEB Office voice line: 713-425-2440

*Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through March 28, 2017. However, after that date, registrations must be honored by the individual or agency involved. If you are unable to attend, substitute attendees are authorized and encouraged!*